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Why Christian Missions?

A GROUP OF FOUR PROGRAMS

By
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Price, 10 cents

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION
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PROGRAM BOOKLETS FOR ADULT GROUPS

This is the tenth in a series of ten program booklets planned by the Committee on Missionary Education of the Commission on Missions of the Congregational and Christian Churches. The series will probably be extended beyond these ten units. The price of each booklet is ten cents.

UNIT I *(four programs): India Today* by Mrs. Genevieve Sargeant Phillips.

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INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

The purpose of these programs is to bring to groups in our Congregational and Christian churches a timely discussion of the principles and motives of modern Christian missions. This is done by presentations and by asking and answering questions. The treatment is necessarily so brief as to exclude any detailed account of missionary work, and even the statement of principles and ideals is only in outline. While these programs are presented as "containing all necessary material without reference to other books and sources," it should also be added that by using the suggested books and other sources a group can make this outline the basis for a broad study of different religions, modern world conditions, and problems confronting the home or foreign missionary today. The more each member of the group does his own thinking, and expresses his ideas in his own way, the more profitable the discussions will be. In so far as this is done the text will be useful for guidance and suggestion.

Many questions will arise in the minds of thoughtful readers which have been touched upon but not fully discussed. This does not represent a dogmatic attitude on the part of the author, nor any desire to preclude question. Reasons for some statements and qualifications of others are left out. The best use of the text will be one in which it is not taken as full or final but as a point of departure for better understanding of modern missions.

It is recommended that those taking the parts as "speakers" be urged to read and study the whole program with which they deal. Assignments for other reading should also be made where possible; the idea being to have those who participate do their own thinking. A general discussion open to the whole group should issue from the right use of the program material. The "suggested questions" at the close of each program may be of value in setting off such a discussion.

BOOKS TO READ

The Challenge of Change: What is Happening in Home Missions? by John M. Moore. Cloth, $1.00; Paper, 60 cents.
(A discussion of the home missionary enterprise, with its recent changes in method and motive, its increased social concern, and its growing spirit of cooperation.)

The Clash of World Forces by Basil Mathews. $1.50.
(A vivid presentation of Nationalism, Bolshevism, and Christianity as world forces.)

World Revolution and Religion by Paul Hutchinson. $2.00.
(Provocative discussion of political, economic, racial, and other changes and their relation to religion.)

Human Needs and World Christianity by Francis J. McConnell. Cloth, $1.50; Paper, 75 cents.
(How Christianity is meeting basic human needs today.)

God's World by Cornelius H. Patton. $2.00.
(Modern missions analyzed against the background of a broad discussion of world conditions.)

The Present Day Summons by John R. Mott. $2.50.
(Clear statement of present day tasks of Christian missions by the chairman of the International Missionary Council.)

Roads to the City of God by Basil Mathews. $1.00.
(A brief account of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, held in 1928.)

Attitudes Toward Other Faiths by D. J. Fleming. Cloth, $1.50; Paper, $1.00.
(Problems arising from contact of Christianity with other religions are discussed with concrete examples.)

The Christ of the Indian Road by E. Stanley Jones. $1.00.
(Popular expression of the new spirit in Christian missions.)

Youth in a Believing World by John Clark Archer. $1.00.
(A brief and authoritative description of essential elements of the main non-Christian religions.)

The Bantu Are Coming by Ray E. Phillips. $2.00.
(Tells the story of Christian missions in industrialized South Africa.)

An Uphill Road in India by M. L. Christlieb. $2.00.
(Beautifully and sympathetically, yet without glossing over any of the difficulties involved, a woman missionary tells of her work with Indian women.)

God and the Census by Robert N. McLean. Cloth, $1.00; Paper 60 cents.
(An interesting book that tells how home missionaries are trying to "have God counted" in new communities as well as old.)

PROGRAM I

Christianity and Other Religions

Hymn: "The Church's One Foundation."

Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20.

Prayer.

Program.

Leader:

In these four programs we are going to take up the question, "Why Christian Missions?" Many are asking today whether the Church should continue its missionary work in the home land and especially in foreign countries; some are openly opposed to it. We can well spend four meetings frankly facing and discussing these questions and objections.

Whenever a Christian group sends anyone out of its own community to extend its faith and life in any way it is engaging in missionary activity. That activity takes many forms; much of it is human service of such evident value that most Christian people approve even when they do not feel constrained to participate in it. But Christian missionaries do not feel that they have done their full task until they have brought individuals to a personal appropriation of the Christian faith. Now, many people look upon religion as a personal matter; they dislike efforts directed toward the converting of people from one faith to another. They deplore any such propaganda in their own communities where differing forms of the Christian faith exist and where various non-Christian groups and secular "ways of life" are more or less clearly marked. This attitude becomes very clear cut and definite when the question of foreign missions is raised. We can best face the whole issue as it applies to this major aspect

of the relation of Christianity to non-Christian religions. Each country has its own religion (or religions), a religion that is wrought into the life of its people and through which they have expressed their own genius and character; is not the religion of any people the best for them, and is it not an unwarranted invasion of their deepest spiritual culture to take to them a different faith? We have all heard this question asked and frankly some of us think it a serious one for missions. But we want to look at it squarely and see what is in it.

First Speaker:

We may approach this question by taking a look at the religious history of some of the best known countries. When we do that we find that most peoples today have religions that came to them through missionary effort, that is, they came first as foreign religions. We know, of course, that this is true of ourselves. Christianity came to Europe from Palestine by way of Greece and Rome. But the same thing is true of Buddhism in China and Japan; of Mohammedanism in India, Turkey and northern Africa as well as in other places. Primitive peoples like those of Africa seem in the main to have developed their own religions with little outside influence and the same is true of Shintoism in Japan. Perhaps the most impressive native religion is the Hinduism of India. However, India has received largely from the outside, mainly in the form of the Moslem faith, and, on the other hand has sent its own Buddhist missionaries abroad into Thibet and China. With the exception of the "primitive religions" then, there seems to be no people that can be said to have exclusively its own religion, if we mean by "its own" a religion that did not come to it from without.

That this spread of religions has made for progress can hardly be doubted. The new and "foreign" religion has brought new ideas, moral invigoration, a

break-up of old and degenerate practices; in short it has made for spiritual progress. In some cases the old religion has been practically wiped out, but more often the new faith has assimilated to itself the better elements of the old and even many of its external forms. For example Roman Catholic Christianity in France and Italy transformed pagan holy places into Christian shrines and changed the names of local deities into those of Christian saints. The coming of a new religion subjects the existing order to a subtle but persistent and effective judgment. If it has sufficient vitality and keeps itself free from degeneration, the result is a general lifting of standards and the purging out of lower forms of the old faith. The open and free movement of religions has been one of the greatest forces for moral and spiritual progress. As a general principle it should be approved and encouraged. A religion should never be forced on any people, but those who find something in their religion vitally important to human life will naturally feel impelled to share it with other races and nations and groups. In following that prompting arising from personal experience of our faith we become willing agents of the spiritual progress of the world.

Second Speaker:

What has been said leads us directly to the question whether there is any fundamental difference between religions, or whether it is true, as some say, that one religion is as good as another. We may agree that the spread of religions has been a spiritual and moral stimulus, on the whole tending to progress. But we have still to ask whether that is due to the novelty and variety that comes with change or to the superiority of the new religion? The answer would seem to be that mere change of itself does not necessarily mean advance; and that we find in history religious deterioration as well as progress. We must consider particular cases

to make effective comparison. When we do that we can find conspicuous cases of advancement due to the introduction of distinctly superior religions. Certainly Christianity is, or was, a better religion than that which our ancestors followed when they offered human sacrifices in the forests of northern Europe. Buddhism is a far nobler religion than the Shintoism of Japan or the ancestor worship and animism of China. Islam, too, has been a distinct improvement on the native religions of Africa as it was a wholesome reform throughout Arabia and Syria at its beginning.

The Dakota Indians today are a people who have given up entirely their old religion which was inseparably bound up with the buffalo, their chief source of food supply. Now the buffalo has gone; the conditions of life are radically changed. The faithful service of Christian teachers through a hundred years has given this Indian tribe a new beginning in the Christian faith. With the passing of the old order went the old religion and in its place comes one in which the Indian of today and tomorrow can find the moral discipline and spiritual support that he needs.

Leader:

We have been making rather broad statements regarding the different religions. But we ought not overlook the fact that there are many forms in which Christianity is to be found both in the past and the present which are corrupted with superstition and lacking in spiritual power. On the other hand there are fine and high forms of Buddhism and other non-Christian religions.

Third Speaker:

We should take these facts into account. A peculiar obligation rests upon those who would propagate Christianity to free it from beliefs, practices and atti-

tudes that are not in harmony with its essential nature. The real value of a religion is found not in historical and contemporary aberrations but in the central spirit and idea. It is not always easy to define this essential nature in words; that is the task of the special student of religion.

But it is evident to any thoughtful person that one religion is not as good as another, and that the fact that a people have a certain religion does not necessarily mean that it is the best one for them. It may, on the contrary, become very bad for them by sanctifying and keeping alive habits of mind that destroy the power of that people to make progress along the whole front of human culture. Thus the caste system in India is rooted in the religion of India; something has got to be done to the religious life of the people before they can be freed from the caste system. Buddhism tried to do that thing by a reform from within, but in the end it failed. Now Christianity comes to challenge caste and the whole conception of life upon which it is based. The comparison between the two religions is not one to be forced; it will make itself felt, has already made itself felt simply by their being brought together.

After all, why should we say that one religion is as good as another or that the religion any people have is the best for them just because they have it? We don't say that about other things. We don't say it about medicine; western scientific medicine is better than any other system in Africa, China, India or anywhere else, and we do not hesitate to affirm it. It is not "western" except by the accident that it was in the west that it developed. It is scientific, that is, it is based on facts about the human body and the causes of disease; upon knowledge about the real properties of curative drugs together with a great body of scientific knowledge concerning diet, sanitation, and the laws of health. The same thing may be said about the whole

range of scientific knowledge; it is not any more true of nature in the occident than it is in the orient. The weird and superstitious ideas that most of the population of the world still cherish about the world they live in are not as good as this knowledge. Neither are the ideas about the nature of man and God and the way of personal development held by those same people as good as the Christian knowledge of God and man. In many ways they are disastrously bad. It is of even greater importance that men should have the best knowledge of God and the spiritual order than that they should have the benefits of scientific medicine based on the best available knowledge of their bodies and the physical world in which those bodies live.

This view that religions are not better or worse comes from thinking of religion as a cultural form merely, and not as a realm in which beliefs are more or less true and acts and attitudes more or less successful adjustment to reality. That is a theory frankly held by some people. To them religion is a poetic and symbolic system, created essentially by our imagination. Religions are not "true" or "false," just as poetry is not true or false. If we grant this, then religion is a matter of aesthetic preference and nothing more. But most of us who take our religion seriously feel that it is much more than that; that it has to do with a real God and our relations with Him, and with the fundamental spirit of our relations to others. There is a truth, then, which it is of the utmost importance that we should know. But it is a truth which is true not only for us but for all men everywhere. By seriously believing in and following a religious faith we imply its essential validity and truth for all men everywhere, just as in employing a system of medicine we show our confidence that it is based on the true nature of the body—not our particular bodies but all human bodies.

Leader:

We have taken two important steps toward the answer to our question; first, we have found that most countries have religions which came from without, and, second, that one religion is not as good as another. But we must also face the fact that the great religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, and Mohammedanism have high moral teachings, and real spiritual values. There is much truth to be found in them and it has been a source of strength to those who have sought it and lived by it. Isn't it wrong to disturb peoples who have these religions by the introduction of Christianity? Can we go to them and tell them that they are all wrong when we know that there is much that is right in their belief; can we tell them that their religions are false when there is so much in them that is true?

Fourth Speaker:

This really isn't as hard a question as it seems. It certainly would be wrong for a Christian missionary to tell a Hindu that he is all wrong or to denounce the Buddhist faith as false to a devout follower of the Buddha. But the missionary of today doesn't do that because he does not think in those terms of non-Christian religions. He does not work by denial and denunciation of the old faiths. He rejoices in and approves of all their truths and all their moral values. To those elements he gives full support. Like Jesus he comes "not to destroy but to fulfill." It is true that, living among the people, he has painful knowledge of the failure of those religions to meet fully the moral and spiritual needs of the people in actual life. He finds that a new access of spiritual power, a new start in moral growth is needed that the existing religion seems unable to supply. There are practices associated with certain religions that he must oppose because they are clearly bad. He must oppose polygamy; he must contend for the freedom of women and the abolition of

caste; he must persistently deny the belief in demons and other superstitions that hinder free moral and mental development and often cause unnecessary suffering. But the high moral and spiritual teachings of the great religions he accepts. Starting with them he goes on to give their completion in the Christian gospel. He tells the Confucianist that to be a good Confucianist he must go on to become a Christian. As Kagawa, the great Japanese Christian says, "Christianity is the completion of all the values of all religions." A distinguished Indian Christian, Sadhu Sundar Singh, declares, "There are many beautiful things in Hinduism, but the fullest light is from Christ. . . . Hinduism has been digging channels. Christ is the water to flow through these channels."

The missionary today has a very delicate task; one in which he must "rightly divide the word of truth" and discriminate between the elements in religions that are of permanent value and those that obstruct the free development of those values. Professor Roderick Scott, of Fukien Christian University, says, "The virtue of the missionary of yesterday was self-sacrifice; the virtue of the missionary today is clear thinking." This does not mean, of course, that the one lacked in clear thinking nor that the other does not have the spirit of self-sacrifice, but the emphasis today is laid on clear discrimination of values.

Leader:

We can appreciate the value of this emphasis in the light of the fact that many of the ancient religions and philosophies of the Orient are breaking down under the weight of their own limitations and the conditions of modern life. A Chinese educator declares, "In China it is not a question of Christianity or some other religion, but of Christianity or no religion." Into this crisis of the spiritual life of the world Christianity comes to "fulfill," to "complete," to give the peoples of

the world a new faith which has in it resources and capacity for spiritual leadership that are adequate to the demands of the time.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

(It will be useful to have certain ones designated to take the lead in consideration of such questions as these):

1. Are there pagan conceptions or philosophies of life honestly held in our "Christian" communities? Even by people who belong to our churches?

2. Is there any similarity between the caste system of India and the status of the negro, the Jew and the Oriental in America? What has Christianity to do with this situation?

3. What reason have you to believe that Christianity can meet the needs of the modern world,—its social, moral, spiritual needs? Will the meeting of such needs be by a spread of Christianity just as it is in any existing form, or will continuous development of its ideas and applications to life be needed?

PROGRAM II

Are We Forcing Our Ways on Others?

Hymn: "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life."

Scripture: Acts 2: 1-21.

Prayer.

Program.

Leader:

After our last discussion I think we all agree that we have not only the right but a sacred obligation to share our Christian faith with the non-Christian world. The "non-Christian" world is of course in the United States as well as elsewhere. But there are some pretty serious objections to be urged as to the way in which missionary work has actually been done. Thinking of foreign missions for the moment, the charge is that our missionaries are imposing our western culture, our denominational divisions and other peculiarly western forms of religious life upon those in the Orient who are drawn to the Christian faith. Let us take up this criticism now and see what grounds there are for it.

First Speaker:

I shall begin by granting that the charge is well founded on facts. Anyone who is even slightly acquainted with the spread of Christianity during the past hundred years knows that in many cases native customs have yielded to the ways of the west with the acceptance of Christianity. European clothing, American furniture and western social forms have been so closely identified with Christianity and have seemed so natural to the missionaries themselves that their use has been taken as part evidence at least, that the inner life has been made Christian. But this has never

been true of the greatest missionaries and native leaders. The really modern missionary of today recognizes and is consciously striving to avoid this confusing of western forms of culture with Christianity.

As a matter of fact, however, social custom and personal habits do not exist as purely surface forms unrelated to the moral and spiritual life. At certain points such forms either build up character or destroy it. The Christian teacher in another land, even as in our own nominally Christian country, is continually concerned with customs and habits and must deal with them in making Christianity practical. The Christian cannot be indifferent to foot-binding in China, to the caste system in India, to public licensed prostitution in Japan, to polygamy in Africa, just as he cannot be indifferent to child labor, industrial exploitation and political corruption in this country. In so far as customs are destructive of bodily health or moral and social values, the Christian must try to modify them in the direction of health and freedom. It is true that forms of morality are in some degree relative to climate, tradition and circumstances, but the sacredness of personality, which is the basic thing in the Christian's conception of life, is not relative. Negatively, that principle condemns all use of any human person as merely a means to an end, such as slavery or prostitution in any form. Positively, it constrains all who accept it to good will and loving service. No such principle can be vitally held without working changes in personal habits and social customs. These things are true everywhere and have to do with home and foreign missions alike.

The mistake has been in approaching this question from the outside and in allowing such really relative things as language, clothes, furniture, to have an undue importance. In all such matters the modern missionary is following the example of the best missionaries of the past in seeking to preserve and encourage all that is

good in the customs and the aesthetic and cultural forms of the peoples whom he serves.

Gradually the church community and the Christian way of life have become knit into the life of other peoples, and are finding their own expression in terms of that life. The Indian, for example, is worshipping frequently not in an American form of church building, but in his own Indian form, more nearly expressive of his life, sometimes a roofless building, sometimes a pavilion open at the sides, sometimes bearing a close resemblance to the temple forms of the past. Everywhere communion service is being developed along with ritual that fits the thinking of the people, even to the use of dark bread and native wine. In China a memorial service for the "heroes of the Cross" who have given their lives for their faith was worked out in Chinese style, with Chinese bowls in brilliant color filled with grains of many hues,—a perfect illustration of: "The blood of the martyr is the seed of the church," and "by their fruits ye shall know them." The one incongruous note of that service with its oriental atmosphere was the hymn with which it closed, in glaringly Western form to the tune of "Shall we gather at the River." The visitor from America stared in amazement at a Chinese friend by her side. "Yes," said he, "that's the one incongruous note. We have got to develop Christian hymns and Christian music that will express China and the Chinese Christianity."

Leader:

We can all appreciate this misconception of the missionary task, and the sincere effort now being made to avoid it. But there is a question that goes deeper, and that is the carrying to foreign lands of our denominational divisions. This is surely confusing to peoples who are not informed about or interested in the historical origins of our divisions and find no present rea-

son for them. Are we not rendering a doubtful service to the world by taking to it a divided Christianity?

Second Speaker:

Sectarianism is a great handicap to Christian effort. We recognize this clearly in American communities; it is even more of a handicap in other lands. This is really a major problem that we and our representatives abroad have to work at together. We must confess with sincere shame that we have handicapped our Christian message to the world by our division.

There are some things that ought to give us encouragement, however. Interdenominational cooperation in the United States is a growing reality. In the orient the missionary and native Christians often lead in freeing Christianity from its sectarian limitations. Faced by overwhelmingly pagan influences they naturally seek as great a degree of cooperation with Christians of other denominations as is possible. Of course there are intensely sectarian bodies which will not go very far in such cooperation, and there is the great division between Protestant and Catholic. But the main Protestant communions are working together more effectively today than ever before. In fact, the missionaries of these denominations are leading the home churches in both the practical and doctrinal aspects of Christian unity.

While the divided condition of Christian mission forces is still a sad and serious obstacle to the progress of Christianity there are still these facts that give encouragement.

1. By comity arrangements certain territorial assignments are agreed upon by which overlapping is avoided. This is increasingly true in Home Missionary work. The home missionary agencies of the different denominations are cooperating to prevent over-churching and to see that communities that cannot support a number

of churches are being provided with religious privileges. Abroad, our American Board is given responsibility for Turkey; the Presbyterian Board, for Persia; and each denomination has its area in Mexico. This plan is not perfectly carried out and there are always the non-cooperating groups. But a great deal of duplication is avoided. There are fewer over-churched communities in our own country, and in many areas of the foreign field people know Christianity only in one form.

2. Where several denominations have established missionary work certain forms of union effort have been achieved. This is true especially of colleges, seminaries and teacher training schools. The Union Medical College in Peiping, Union Theological Colleges in Poona, Pasumalai and Bangalore, and Fukien Christian University, are a few of many such institutions. In the United States the same principle holds, as for example, in the migrant work carried on by the Council of Women for Home Missions.

3. In almost every great mission area there are National Christian Councils in which the main Christian denominations cooperate somewhat after the fashion of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. This represents an important step toward harmonious effort.

4. There are in China and India actual organic unions of different communions that hold promise for the future. The United Church of China, the North India United Church, and the South India United Church are going concerns. Further extension of these unions is being actively promoted by native Christians and missionaries. This same tendency appeared at home in the recent union of our Congreational and Christian churches.

So long as the Christian movement is dependent, in considerable measure, upon the Church in America and Europe and so long as the home Church is divided we can hardly escape altogether the evil of a divided work abroad. But real progress is being made, a most striking indication of which was the meeting of the International Missionary Council in Jerusalem in 1928, where 240 representatives of 50 countries representing the major Christian bodies took counsel together regarding the common task and found an inspiring unity of spirit and purpose.

Leader

It seems as though we have been led from a criticism of foreign missions to one of the great problems of Protestant Christianity in general. Perhaps the missionary enterprise while suffering from our division may help us to find a working unity. But we still haven't disposed of this matter of Christianity being a "foreign" religion in the Orient. Division or unity is only one part of the question. Supposing that there should be a United Church of India, or China or Japan —what kind of Church will it be? Will it not be still a western church in many ways?

Third Speaker:

The answer to that question is to be found in the growth of the native church. It is the desire both of the native Christians and the missionaries today to develop a Christianity that is truly Chinese in China, Indian in India, and so on. This is called the indigenous Christian Church. In general this means that forms of worship and organization, architecture, hymns and even statements of doctrine shall be such as the nationals themselves devise to express and cultivate the spiritual realities of Christianity.

But that is a rather abstract way of putting it. Let us be more specific. The first thing needed is native leadership. There are today thousands of native evangelists, Bible women, doctors, nurses, teachers and other workers in the various forms of service the missions carry on. From this number there have arisen leaders of marked ability and spiritual power. They have already taken full control of the church life in many areas and are increasingly assuming the authority and responsibility for the Christian enterprise that were at first in the hands of foreign missionaries. Now there is a speeding up of this process almost everywhere. Definite programs of transferring control to native leaders are being pushed forward everywhere. The presidents of many Christian Colleges in China, India and Japan are nationals. In many missions the majority vote on almost every question is now that of nationals. In church affairs in most places the missionary is now a helper rather than a director. Bishop Azariah is chairman of the National Christian Council of India and one of the executive secretaries, Mr. P. O. Phillip, is a native Indian. In Japan much of the work is and from the beginning has been in the hands of Japanese.

What the final expression of Christianity in doctrine, worship and institutional activities will be in any country will eventually be the outcome of this leadership of nationals. A good start has been made toward the true end of foreign missionary work, which is happily expressed in the words of Toyohiko Kagawa, "We want Jesus Christ to take out his first and second naturalization papers in Japan." When the process is completed, —and it will take a long time,—we shall find new and doubtless finer outworkings of the Christian gospel. It will be seen that Christ is "foreign" in no country, but that his spirit can infuse and quicken, as well as purify and reform the native culture of all lands. In the persons of Kagawa, Cheng and many others we al-

ready see the Orient's interpretation of Christ returning to enrich and complete the Christianity of the West.

Fourth Speaker:

We all rejoice that Christianity is becoming so genuinely a native religion in each country. But we ought still to realize that there are many things the western world can give to the Orient. First, there is scientific knowledge about nature. This knowledge has been discovered and developed in the West in fairly recent times, but it is no more western than eastern; it is as true in China as in Germany. The Oriental peoples are showing their appreciation of this fact by their eager assimilation of so-called western science.

Scientific knowledge has been applied to every human interest, and the various forms of its application have brought relief from pain, release from labor, relative security against many natural evils such as drought, famine and pestilence.

This knowledge and the techniques by which it is made useful to man must be taken to the whole world. It is a large part of the service the missionary renders in the spirit of Christ to put this knowledge and these methods at the disposal of whole populations. This is what Albert Schweitzer does in equatorial Africa in his hospital. All the knowledge and skill of scientific medicine and surgery are brought to the native people to relieve their pain and heal their sicknesses. Thousands of missionary doctors and nurses throughout the world in hundreds of hospitals and dispensaries are doing the same thing. And in every way possible they are teaching the laws of personal hygiene, community sanitation and healthful diet. In short they give knowledge as applied to bodily health. Such knowledge is a sacred trust to be shared for the benefit of mankind. It is beside the mark to say that it is western culture. Truth is not of any culture, east or west; it is universal.

The same application of scientific knowledge is made when people are taught better methods of cultivating land, selecting seed, breeding poultry, etc., making men more secure against famine. The engineering skill which constructs dams, irrigation systems, highways, and drainage canals, put at the disposal of the rural districts of China, do not constitute "cultural imperialism"; it is simply the sharing of a knowledge and skill which are just as true and useful in the east as in the west. It is the same service that our negro schools in the south and our Indian schools in the west seek to render to the peoples of those races. It is our Christian opportunity to put at their disposal all means to a better life.

Leader:

The benefits of scientific truth and its application are so evident that few will find any objection to sharing it with the world. But we are likely to feel differently about religious doctrine. Isn't that a more personal matter with the individual and should not each people formulate its own doctrine in terms of its spiritual genius and traditions?

Fifth Speaker:

Few of us are expert in such matters, and we can not always see where the line is to be drawn between fundamental, universal truth and its varied doctrinal formulations. But certain great ideas or principles have made themselves clear in Christian teaching and history. They are just as true for east as for west, as is the scientific knowledge we have been talking about. They are the *great* truths of the Christian faith, and are universal. What are they? (1) God is a righteous, loving Father of men. (2) Man is a spiritual personality with capacity for infinite life and fellowship with God. (3) God's love and forgiveness are unmeasured and any and all men

may share in both through sincere penitence and faith. (4) The inner character of God, his attitude toward men and his purpose for them are clearly and fully disclosed in the life, character and teaching of Jesus. The way of life is service and good will. It is God's will that men should have life and have it abundantly.

Here is truth; not the limited expression of some racial culture; but deep, universal truth about the nature of man and God. It came to us from the Orient, but it is not Oriental. We take it to the east from the Occident, but it is not Occidental. It does, however, correct the errors so characteristic of the Orient, namely, that God is the All (pantheism); that man is not a true personality, but a temporary appearance; that man has no power over his own destiny even through faith and self-surrender to God (Kismet); that the salvation of man comes through denying life and extinguishing the desire for life. Christianity brings a corrective in ideas or doctrine to the whole fatalistic, life-denying philosophy of the east. It boldly affirms that man is a soul; that love is of God, that life is not to be denied and fled, but to be purified and spiritualized and made full through a love that has God as its supreme object.

Whatever other knowledge the peoples of the world, at home and abroad, need in the realm of natural science to gain mastery over the physical world, this knowledge of spiritual truth is necessary to undergird life with hope and courage and to infuse it with enduring beauty.

We may be glad that our missionaries, at home and abroad, are repudiating anything that smacks of cultural imperialism or the separation of religion from life, but still recognize the responsibility of sharing with the world through teaching and illustration those great truths both scientific and religious which hold good everywhere, and which are necessary to the highest human welfare.

Suggested Questions

1. Is it "sectarian" to be loyal to the life and world service of our own denomination?

2. Discuss the policy of our Home Boards in encouraging federated and union movements in small communities, and the policy of our American Board in participating in union colleges and hospitals and in such movements as the United Church of China.

3. Why should both home and foreign missionaries feel so strongly the desire to eliminate denominational rivalry?

4. Will anything essentially Christian be lost in the development of a truly Chinese, or Indian or Japanese Christianity? Is it likely that some better expressions of Christianity may come of this process? Is there such a thing as an "American Christianity?"

PROGRAM III

Our Own Motives

Hymn: "In Christ There is No East or West."

Scripture: John 15: 1-16.

Prayer.

Program.

Leader:

For this discussion period let us take a look at ourselves, and inquire what our motive has been in supporting missions. We may have complete confidence in the men and women who represent us in Christian service abroad and in special lines of effort in the United States and we may honor them for their work, but after all *we* are the Church that sends them and it is important that we shall have the right attitude and spirit about it. I suppose that most of us have never turned upon ourselves and asked what our motives have been, whether they have been worthy and Christian, or whether there have not crept into our hearts attitudes that are wrong and which must handicap our work abroad. While we are talking about the world's need and the way it is being met it is a good time to turn the spot light upon our own thought and purpose. When I say "we" I mean, of course, the whole church during the hundred years or so that we have covered the main part of modern missionary activity. I shall ask our speakers to take up the different motives that have appeared and make a frank criticism of them. Doubtless that will help us to winnow out the true Christian motive and reaffirm it with clearer understanding.

First Speaker:

I find, for one thing, that there has been what might be called a militaristic motive in missions. Now that

we are giving the whole matter of militarism a thorough criticism and are seeing how contrary it is to the spirit of Christ it is rather shocking to find that there has been something of that spirit even in missions. We have sometimes thought of the followers of Christ as an army and have seen the missionary force as the front rank of a world-wide battle line. We have taken very literally the idea of the Church Militant. Our hymns have supported that conception: "Onward, Christian Soldiers," "The Son of God Goes Forth to War," and many other hymns are martial in spirit. And then we have had for so long that black and white conception of religions, thinking of all non-Christian religions as false and utterly bad and of our own religion as the true and perfect one arrayed in irreconcilable hostility against them.

The trouble with this way of looking at things religious is that we fall too easily into the mistake of thinking of the *enemy* as the system of religious faith and practice of non-Christian peoples and even as the people themselves who hold to that faith. We are then in the position of enemies of the people among whom we work; a conversion is a capture; a continuous battle of argument and emotional appeal is made against the opposing system; any wide-spread failure of a non-Christian faith is viewed and reported as a defeat for them and a victory for us; if, by any sad mischance one of our number should become a Buddhist or a Moslem it is treason. In short, the whole language and all the emotions of warfare have been employed in the prosecution of the "campaign" of missions. We have spoken of the "conquest" of the world for Christ by the "army" of the Lord.

Now there is no question about the power of the military spirit to move men to action and self-sacrifice, even to heroism. The trouble is that it gets out of hand and misconceives its true objective. Life *is* a battle and Christianity *is* on a crusade against enemies

of the soul of man. But those enemies are not other men who hold a different faith, or no faith, nor systems of religion that are not Christian. Today the Christian world is looking for the "moral equivalent for war" so that even war between nations may be ended. It is all the more necessary that we should purge from our hearts the spirit of conquest in our missionary effort. Whatever else it may or may not be the reaching out of the church to the non-Christian world is not in any sense a warfare between Christianity and other religions or between Christian people and non-Christian people. Those peoples are not in any sense our enemies; they are fellow men in a common quest for God and for fullness and freedom of life. We repudiate as unworthy and un-Christian the whole militaristic idea of missions. Its influence may have been greater or less, but now that we see clearly its anti-Christian character let us say, "We will have none of it."

Leader:

There is another demon that we must cast out if we are to go about this business of missions as Christians and that is the spirit of competition. That spirit has been rampant in our country during the past century; in business it is held to be almost a first principle of economic orthodoxy. How many times have we heard that "competition is the life of trade?" Whatever be the material and moral liabilities of such a doctrine no one will question that it has had full sway in the life of the western world in modern times. One of the chief relations of any man in business is with his competitors; a constant struggle goes on for customers and many concerns have their business secrets, their strategy, their constant effort to gain some advantage in the ceaseless rivalry, even though too great an advantage might mean the business failure of the competitor. This is very much like a war without bullets and one danger of it is the absorption by an enlarging corporation of

smaller competitors until a monopoly is reached in which all competition ceases. Then the monopoly becomes a problem of regulation and control for the government, for it still has the aggressive spirit, only now it is unrestrained by competitors in dealing with the public. Is this a suggestive figure of our missionary aim?

Second Speaker:

Undoubtedly something very much like this has been going on in religion and to a far too great extent still goes on. Protestant Christianity has broken up into numerous denominations which have found themselves competitors. It is not strange that the people who in business accept competition as a basic principle should find themselves acting upon it in religion. And so we have seen a century of denominational rivalry and competition in which from time to time the real values of Christianity have been lost. There is still too much of this sort of thing; too much zeal in the Church is zeal for the visible, numerical and doctrinal triumph of "my" denomination over "yours." But we are becoming heartily ashamed of it. Now it may be fairly charged that the church as a whole has been touched by this spirit in its approach to the non-Christian world. Christian missions have been an expression on a grand scale of the spirit of denominational competition, only here the Church or Christianity has taken the place of the denomination and the feeling has been intensified against a rival which, being less known and further away, and an altogether ungodly rival, may be opposed without any twinges of Christian conscience. The lusty spirit of competition has made itself felt in our missionary work; it has stirred us to strenuous activity, has led us to invest our dollars; but it is a sad corruption of the Christian attitude toward men and women who hold a different faith. It has wrought havoc in our home church and still is one of the most serious

obstacles to the progress of the Kingdom of God here; it should be banished from our thinking and practice when we come to the world-wide relation of Christianity to mankind. Whether it is necessary in business or not, (and even there it must be guarded and regulated), it certainly has no place in the hearts of those who seek to serve their fellow men in the spirit of Christ and to lead them to a personal fellowship with him.

Third Speaker:

There is another thing in our attitude toward other peoples and religions that seems wrong to me. Its classic expression is in the missionary hymn, "Tho' every prospect pleases and only man is vile." In another verse of the same hymn are these lines, "Can we whose souls are lighted, With wisdom from on high, Can we to men benighted The lamp of life deny?" Now the intention may be good in this hymn, but it is a glaring statement of self-righteousness and of condescension if not contempt toward non-Christian peoples. Even though it were true in its assumptions, no one whose soul is really lighted with wisdom from on high is going to sing about it and characterize his fellow men as vile because they have different customs and religious beliefs. There are men, of course, both in countries where Christianity is the prevailing religion and in other countries who are vile enough, but that is a matter of personal character; it is not a distinction between races or classes as such nor between the adherents of different religions as such. And no one who feels that way toward others can do much for them. One of the bitterest criticisms of the Christian world today by educated orientals is directed against this smug assumption of superiority. I know that modern-minded missionaries are not characterized by such a spirit, and that many people in our churches are free from it, but it has found so many expressions that we

must admit with shame that it has prompted to some extent the support of the missionary enterprise. It never was Christian and today, when the leaders of other nations are becoming thoroughly familiar with our western life it will be fatal to the progress of Christianity if we allow that spirit to influence us. We must, as our modern missionaries are doing, openly and from the heart renounce it.

Leader:

This confession of the unchristian elements in our missionary motive is good for the soul. What is more important, however, is to discover what the really worthy motive has been and is. By cultivating an impulse that is deeply and truly Christian we shall insure both the quality and the continuance of effective effort.

Fourth Speaker:

While we admit and repudiate these unchristian motives that have been present in our support of missionary work, we have no difficulty in discerning a motive that has always been present and which is wholly Christian; that is, love for men and the desire to share with all men the Christ who is the source of our own best knowledge and experience of God. Wherever and whenever any effective missionary service has been done this spirit has been at the heart of it. When we free it from other things we have an attitude through which the spirit of God can freely work.

This has really been the way the best of our missionaries have gone about their work all along. They have not looked upon the people to whom they have gone as enemies, but as friends. They have not thought of the religious systems of those people as opposing and competing sects. They have gone in a spirit of humility, as friends, renouncing all rivalry and all claim to superiority. This puts the bearer of the Christian evangel

and those to whom he would give it upon a basis of mutual respect and open confidence. There is no secret strategy. The Christian has a secret but it is what Paul calls (in the words of the Moffatt translation) the "open secret of the gospel." Dr. Newell tells of this approach to Buddhist priests in Japan over thirty years ago. He went into the Buddhist temple in his city and became a sincere friend of the priests. They worked out a plan according to which the priests for an hour read and interpreted the Buddhist scriptures to Dr. Newell; then for an hour Dr. Newell read and explained the New Testament to the priests. This went on for years and was typical of the frank and friendly relations existing. As a result of such relations a number of the priests became Christian preachers. Dr. Newell was sure there was a transcendent worth in the Christ whom he introduced to the Buddhist priests and some of them eventually found that to be the case. Appreciation of their religion, open friendliness with them proved the best way to share the Christ with them.

The spirit of love is today our motive for that great range of human service, medical, educational, social, that our missions render to the world. Such service is not less Christian or spiritual than what we call evangelism. Jesus represents the final judgment as based upon such service rendered in love or the failure to do it. We do not ask for any reward, in terms of new members for our churches or even of so many converts to our faith. Such conversions come but they are not our reward. We do this work because we love men and have the power to help them.

The implications of such a motive in the practical affairs of the world are being seen very concretely today. A merging of the service which a church renders to its own community with the activity of home mission agencies and the work abroad is found at several points:

1. A Christian relation between different races has come to be a living issue for home churches that are awake to their responsibility, for in many communities live peoples of different colors. Our American Missionary Association maintains schools for Indians such as Santee Normal Training School and gives aid and leadership to Indian Churches. The work of Negro schools and colleges is well known. Foreign missions are a large scale enterprise in inter-racial service.

2. The increasing sensitiveness to the need of Christian principles in economics and industry at home links up with such a modern program as that described by Ray E. Phillips in South Africa.

3. The cause of world peace and human brotherhood is profoundly served by missionaries, home and foreign, who are more and more conceiving their function as that of peace makers and interpreters of one race or nation or group to another. Briefly, these are some of the broader expressions of the motive of human service. Its outreach is as wide as human need.

Today Christian missions must depend wholly upon this free service of love. Is it a motive strong enough to stir our loyalty and enlist our earnest support? To ask that question is to ask whether we are Christian. If love will not take us as far as the spirit of strife and competition we must sadly confess that we ourselves need to find the true springs of life in Christ. But there is that love for God and man in the Church which will sustain a free and gloriously Christian service to the world. It is our part to cultivate it and direct it toward the world-wide service of men that we call missions. By making our missionary work Christian clear through we open the way to making the world including ourselves, Christian.

Suggested Questions

1. Are missionaries still interested in "saving souls from hell?" If not, what form does their interest in the spiritual life of individuals take?

2. Can we be Christian and not want to share the best of our Christianity with others? What is the meaning of the statement that love is mandatory and universal in its scope?

3. Can we really love people if we know nothing about them and do nothing for them?

4. To what extent can we say that we are aware of the conditions of life of people in other countries and in other parts of our own country and of modern forms of "missionary" service?

PROGRAM IV

Why Cross the Border?

Hymn: "Light of the World We Hail Thee."

Scripture: Luke 10: 25-37.

Prayer.

Program.

Leader:

There is one objection to missions that we ought to consider in this last discussion. It is frequently heard and has weight with a great many people. Haven't we enough to do at home without sending missionaries to people across the seas? Here in our own country are ignorance and poverty, crime and suffering, and a great deal of sheer pagan living. Is not our first obligation to our own people and should we not make America Christian before going abroad to the rest of the world? The burden of this objection is that Christian service, like charity, begins at home.

First Speaker:

It is true that the one prompted by Christian love shows it by serving those nearest to him. But unless his love loses its Christian quality by becoming a limited group loyalty, it reaches out beyond any bounds that may be set. Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan to dispose once for all of the limiting of human helpfulness and sympathy to those of one's own nation. Anyone whom I may help is my neighbor. He told the parable of the marriage feast to show that a favored nation cannot preempt claim to the Gospel indefinitely while the rest of the world receives no invitation. The preaching of Christ presents an opportunity. Most of the citizens of our country have not taken advantage of

it; indeed, many openly scoff at it for there are various forms of paganism in our country. But all the values of Christianity are available to those who seek them. It is important that they be kept clearly and vividly before the minds of men; that is the permanent job of our churches at home and of our home mission agencies. Meanwhile there are the people of other lands to whom the invitation has never (or less often) been given. It is the business of missions to give every nation and every individual opportunities to understand Christ and his way of life. This opportunity should not be denied them pending the conversion of every one in America; nor should it be withheld until all aspects of our national life are fully Christianized.

The Church has always had the world in its purview. It divides the world not into homeland and foreign countries. That distinction is political and geographical. The Church divides the world into Christian and pagan. This division cuts across all geographical boundaries; those persons and those aspects of social life that are not Christian in all countries are the concern of a Christian Church that is fully aware of its task. The organization of the Church's service into Conference, Home and Foreign, does not represent different and conflicting interests, but merely a division of administration for the sake of effective work. It is all the work of the same Church. In the early days of missionary effort the American Board carried on work in the United States as well as abroad, and the American Missionary Association sent missionaries to foreign lands as well as to needy parts of America. The present geographical division of "home" and "foreign" in missionary work is merely a matter of efficiency in service. It is all one work of one Church for one end.

Second Speaker:

After all the attempt to limit ourselves to any area is always defeated. A man must help make his com-

munity safe and wholesome if he is to protect his own home. And the community cannot develop except as it shares with the state in educational, social and civic programs. Our federal government is a political expression of the need of a larger-than-state cooperation. Today that process of widening relationships includes the world. Commercial, industrial, intellectual, and spiritual life are all world-wide. Currents of thought, social and political movements defy all barriers today. The world is one family. There arises the crucial question, what kind of family shall it be—a quarreling, fighting family or a family that is learning to live by a principle of good will, justice and humanity? The whole problem is before us now. Abraham Lincoln once said: "This country cannot endure half slave and half free." The same thing can be said of the world today; the world cannot be part Christian, progressing toward justice and peace; and part pagan, indulging in conflict, hate and greed.

The paganism in our own country and the paganism abroad must be simultaneously overcome. All truly spiritual forces in all countries must cooperate to that end. An advance at home that does not communicate itself to the rest of the world is likely to be a specious gain. On the other hand, we are already being heartened here by the vital progress of Christian ideals in other lands. Ray Phillips in South Africa, Kagawa in Japan, Frank Laubach in the Philippines are not only renewing our Christian courage but they are making us more aware of what genuine Christian living is. The only true progress of Christianity today comes through the fruitful interactions of this world-wide fellowship of service and spiritual growth.

We are not trying to make geographical areas Christian as though the world became Christian by countries and provinces, by islands and continents. We see now that it is areas of human life that must be made Christian. Here geographical boundaries and divisions are

unimportant. It is in the region of social practices, of economic and industrial relations, in the areas of education and politics and business that we want to establish the way of Christ.

In all parts of the world east and west, human selfishness and greed claim a natural right and a traditional title to these human relations; today an awakened Christian conscience assails the old order in the name of human rights and values. The arrogant claims of secularism and sheer materialism are being opposed by the higher conception of life which is the basis of religion. Religion's great rival is Communism which claims that its way of meeting human need and banishing injustice is the only effective way. It takes the road of hatred, violence and frank materialism. A cynical and disillusioned humanity has been very susceptible to its appeal. But worthy as some of its ends are we know that its spirit and method are wrong and the end it seeks too limited. The Christian way of love and faith and spiritual idealism, brought fully into the practical affairs of life, has the key to a progressive deliverance of man in all his social and economic relations.

It must be granted that neither in our own country nor in other countries are Christian forces fully alive to this social need. Efforts to Christianize the social order are only beginning to become serious and effective. But the Christian way is the only way the world around and we ought to encourage it wherever it is being taught and applied.

Third Speaker:

We have been talking about religious systems, and methods and motives of Christian work, and about social justice. But these are all somewhat abstract and general. Let us consider the individual man and see, whatever his economic status, his political party or his nationality may be, what the immediate and ever present problem of his life is. The individual man seeking

the full life is the center of experience in which all these social issues find their meaning. How does he fare in the battle of life? For life is a moral and spiritual struggle; the enemies that assail man in a relentless warfare are ignorance, sin, despair. To live a free and victorious life man, any man and every man, must cope with these enemies. Beneath all the general issues of missionary work is the broad basis of a gloriously fruitful service to individual men, women and children, enabling them to live such a life. The truth that makes men free in all realms is being taught in thousands of mission schools from the kindergarten to the university. Truth of all kinds, the scientific knowledge of nature and the human body, and the spiritual truths about God and man. To man in his ceaseless moral struggle is being brought the powerful ally of the Christ's personal comradeship and his convincing assurance of God's grace and help. The hearts of many are finding courage in a faith that has weathered the storms of history and through the most searching criticism of rational thought and in the light of scientific knowledge has been not weakened, but purged and purified and made more dependable. Rooted deep in the hearts of increasing numbers of individuals of all races is this vital faith, fortifying men against the cynicism, the discouragement and despair that are so prevalent today.

Missionaries continue to render this fundamental service laying in free personalities the foundation of every good thing that we seek in a Christian social, national and international order.

Suggested Questions

1. Is there any vital relation between the Church's growing sense of responsibility for world peace and its undertaking to share the Christian faith with the world?

2. Does the estimate of Christianity which we have been assuming mean that any existing form or expression of Christianity is final?

3. If we say that Christianity is capable of such development and variety of application as to be the world religion of the present and the future are we more or less true to its spirit than if we think of it as "final." (Read John 16:13.)

4. Read Hebrews 11 and show its application to the contribution the various nations and peoples can make to a fully realized Christian life. Can we "without them" be "made perfect"?

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